

NEWS RELEASE



For Immediate Release
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Public invited to celebration of Mexican Independence Day

"Fiestas Patrias" Celebration at Pio Pico State Historic Park

"Fiestas Patrias" celebrates Mexican Independence Day. It will feature the Elena Mendez Dance Group, mariachis, Roberto Garza as Pío Pico, community and food booths, activities for children and historic demonstrations. The event is scheduled to begin at 10:00 AM and continue until 4:00 PM. Admission is free to this event.

In the early hours of September 16, 1810, father *Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla*, accompanied by several conspirators, rang the bell of his little church in the village of Dolores, calling everyone to fight for liberty. This was the beginning of the Independence War, which lasted 10 years.

Save the Date –September 17, 2005, 11 AM – 4 PM

Pío de Jesus Pico IV, (1801 – 1894), was one of California's most fascinating historical figures, a natural politician, entrepreneur and bon vivant. His turbulent and interesting life encompassed almost an entire century. His ancestry reveals a mixture of ethnic heritage, including Spanish, Mexican, Native American, African and Italian. During his long and active life, he rose from poverty to become one of the richest men in California, acquiring more than 500,000 acres of property.

Pío Pico acquired the 8,894-acre Rancho Paso de Bartolo Viejo in 1848, named the land "El Ranchito" (the little ranch) and built the adobe home that has now been restored. He lived at various times in the adobe until 1892. The ranch was used for cattle grazing, and later as a farm for growing an assortment of crops, including wheat, corn, grapes, barley, oats and oranges. Today, Pío Pico State Historic Park is the only remaining property left of the original ranch.

Pío Pico was part of the government of Mexican California from about 1828. His involvement in California government eventually led to his position as Governor of Mexican California in 1832 and again from 1845 until the Americans occupied California in 1846. He witnessed and helped shape nearly a century of California history before his death in Los Angeles on September 11, 1894.

Pío Pico State Historic features the historic Pío Pico Adobe Ranch House, gardens, fruit orchards, and picnic facilities. The park is open Wednesday through Sunday, 10:00 AM to 5:00

PM. Pío Pico State Historic Park is located at Pioneer and Whittier Boulevards, west of the 605 Freeway. The address is 6003 Pioneer Boulevard, Whittier, California, 90606. The park phone number is (562) 695-1217.

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